

AMENDMENT TO TRADING WITH THE ENEMY ACT

FEBRUARY 20, 1926.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. LEA of California, from the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1226]

The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1226) to amend the trading with the enemy act, having considered the same, report thereon with amendment and as amended recommend that it pass.

Amend the bill as follows:

Page 1, beginning with line 7, strike out through line 3, on page 2, and insert in lieu thereof the following:

(3A) An individual who was at such time a citizen or subject of Germany, Austria, Hungary, or Austria-Hungary, and that the money or other property concerned was acquired by such individual while a bona fide resident of the United States, and that such individual, at the time of the return of the money or other property, is a bona fide resident of the United States, and that such individual, at least one year prior to the date upon which this amendment becomes effective, declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States, or of the Philippine Islands, in the manner prescribed in the naturalization laws: or

This bill would authorize the release by the President of seized property to a small group of claimants, who acquired their property while bona fide residents of the United States, and who shall be such residents at the time of the return of their property.

The amendment, approved by the Alien Property Custodian, would confine the return to those who, one year prior to the date this amendment becomes effective, have declared their intention to become citizens of the United States or of the Philippine Islands.

This amendment provides for a return in harmony with returns already authorized by the trading with the enemy act. It simply gives to resident alien enemies, who were temporarily absent at the beginning of the war and acquired their funds in America prior thereto and who subsequent to the war resumed their American residence

and declared their intentions to become citizens, the privilege that has already been granted to resident enemy aliens.

It is understood by the committee that the bill would cover about six cases and the aggregate amount of property involved is materially less than \$1,000,000.

The Senate committee reports made by Senators Borah and King state:

The original trading with the enemy act did not authorize the seizure of the property of enemy nationals residing in the United States, except where they were interned, and all such internees have now had their property released to them by the amendment of June 5, 1920.

It is apparent that the few local residents of this country who were only temporarily absent during the war, and whose property was seized because of their temporary absence, should be placed upon a parity with the general class of alien nationals of former enemy countries, residing in this country, and whose property was never seized at all, as above stated.

Under like circumstances, Great Britain, by order in council, adopted a report of a special committee made to the board of trade December 24, 1923, returning to the owners the property seized in Great Britain under the British trading with the enemy act, belonging to claimants who were "resident in Great Britain before the war, and permitted at its close either to remain or return there."

No one seems to question the merit of the pending bill. The contention has been made in accordance with the suggestions of the Secretary of the Treasury that the entire alien property problem should be disposed of by general legislation. The possibility of any such general legislation, within any reasonable time, is uncertain. Legislative relief of merit should not be denied because of extraneous problems. This measure should be judged on its merit. We concur with the favorable recommendation of the Alien Property Custodian that the bill, as amended, pass.